

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for establishing a trunk between first and second network devices, comprising:
  - monitoring, via the first network device, at least one of a source address [[and]] or destination address in packets destined for or received from the second network device;
  - determining, based on the monitoring, whether a communication pattern exists; and
  - automatically establishing the trunk between the first network device and second network device when the communication pattern is determined to exist.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the determining whether a communication pattern exists includes:
  - detecting a predetermined number of packets having identical source or destination addresses.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein the detecting occurs over a predetermined period of time.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first network device includes a multiport switch and the second network device includes a server.
5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically establishing the trunk includes:  
automatically establishing two or more trunks between the first network device and second network device.
6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein automatically establishing the trunk includes:  
assigning at least two ports on the first network device to the trunk.
7. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 6 further comprising:  
deactivating the trunk when the communication pattern is determined to no longer exist and reassigning the ports to new trunks if a new pattern is determined.
8. (currently amended) A system for establishing at least one trunk between a first network device and a second network device, comprising:  
means for monitoring at least one of traffic to the second network device ~~[[and]]~~ or traffic from the second network device;  
means for determining, based on the monitoring, if a communication pattern exists; and

means for automatically establishing the at least one trunk between the first network device and the second network device when a communication pattern is determined to exist.

9. (original) The system of claim 8 wherein the means for determining if a communication pattern exists includes:

means for detecting a predetermined number of packets having identical source or destination addresses.

10. (original) The system of claim 8 wherein the first network device includes a multiport switch and the second network device includes a server.

11. (original) The system of claim 8 wherein the means for automatically establishing the at least one trunk comprises:

means for associating two or more ports of the first network device with each of the at least one trunk.

12. (original) The system of claim 11 wherein the means for automatically establishing the at least one trunk further comprises:

associating one or more trunk control bits with each port, the trunk control bits indicating a status of the port.

13. (original) The system of claim 8 further comprising:  
  
means for deactivating the at least one trunk when the communication pattern is determined to no longer exist.
14. (original) A network device comprising:  
  
a receiver configured to receive packets having a source address and a destination address; and  
  
an internal rules checker configured to monitor the received source and destination addresses in the received packets, determine whether a communication pattern exists over a predetermined period of time, and establish one or more trunks between the network device and at least one other network device in response to determining that a communication pattern exists.
15. (original) The network device of claim 14 wherein, when determining whether a communication pattern exists, the internal rules checker is configured to:  
  
detect a predetermined number of packets having identical source or destination addresses over the predetermined period of time.
16. (original) The network device of claim 14 wherein the internal rules checker is further configured to:  
  
deactivate the one or more trunks when the communication pattern is determined to no longer exist.

17. (original) The network device of claim 14 wherein, when establishing the one or more trunks, the internal rules checker is configured to:

assign at least two ports on the network device to each trunk.

18. (original) The network device of claim 14 further comprising:

at least one register configured to store trunking information,

wherein, when establishing the one or more trunks, the internal rules checker sets at least one bit in the at least one register based on the determined communication pattern.